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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)

Mr. Fowler (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. Iceland also aligns itself with this statement.

Six weeks ago the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly completed the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The European Union (EU) welcomed the opportunity offered by this review to focus international attention on the special situation and particular needs of Africa. We presented our views in a detailed statement to the review meeting and through the submission of a position paper. The EU availed itself of the occasion to reaffirm strongly our commitment, in a spirit of partnership and dialogue, to the development of Africa. We do so again today as the Assembly gathers to endorse the outcome of the mid-term review.

The Ad Hoc Committee assessed progress made to date in the implementation of the New Agenda and agreed on recommendations for the next five years. The review recognized that, while some encouraging progress has been made in social and economic development, in increasing democratization, in regional integration and in conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional level, this progress has been uneven, and much remains to be done, as has been outlined, *inter alia*, in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/50/885).

In this context, the EU wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his recent initiative in holding high-level consultations on post-conflict peace-building in West Africa.

The occasion of the mid-term review has allowed us to place UN-NADAF in the context of the related commitments and plans of action of the recent series of major United Nations summits and conferences and to take these commitments into account when making

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recommendations for future action. We reconfirmed the new consensus on an integrated approach to development — an approach which places people at the centre of our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The European Union welcomes the action-oriented nature of the final document of the review meeting and the recommendations on such issues as the strengthening of democratization and the involvement of civil society, good governance, social sector development, economic reform, environment and development, debt, trade and diversification of economies, capacity-building and South-South cooperation.

We commend the commitments made at national level to the implementation of relevant recommendations through, *inter alia*, the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources and through increased allocation of resources to the social sector.

The outcome of the review was the result of detailed negotiations open to all States. All those who participated worked hard to achieve a consensus. The results of this review should now be formally endorsed; we should avoid duplication of effort through reopening the consensus reached.

The support of the international community both at bilateral and multilateral level remains essential. Indeed, since the review meeting, the international community has agreed to take action, through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, on one of the most important issues addressed at the review. In addition, the Paris Club has indicated that it is ready to go beyond the Naples terms to provide debt reduction of up to 80 per cent for countries which qualify for additional relief within the HIPC Initiative, on a case-by-case basis, according to its usual rules, to achieve an exit from unsustainable debt.

In October this year we had an opportunity to strengthen further our support for regional integration in Africa when the Southern African Development Community and the European Union met at ministerial level in Windhoek, Namibia, and agreed to consolidate and increase cooperation in such areas as strengthening democracy, combating illicit drug trafficking, clearance of landmines, promoting regional integration and promoting trade and investment with and within southern Africa.

The European Union remains fully committed to supporting African countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to strive to reach, as soon as possible, the objective of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to be devoted to official development assistance and to the related targets for assistance to the least developed countries, a majority of which are in Africa. We believe that this assistance should be directed to the poorest countries and to the poorest sections of societies. The 20/20 initiative, whereby interested developed and developing countries agree to allocate, respectively, approximately 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes, could also play a useful role.

Needless to say, the role of the United Nations system is central to a successful implementation of the outcome of the mid-term review. It is important that all concerned support the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa as a way to implement the New Agenda for Africa in a coordinated, system-wide manner. We support the efforts of the various funds and programmes, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and other bodies of the United Nations system, to give priority to Africa and to the necessary readjustment of programming, as appropriate, in the light of the outcome of the mid-term review and the assessments of progress made in the implementation of the summits and conferences.

In conclusion, the European Union fully endorses the outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF. We are committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendations, which we hope will lead to real progress in fostering human and social capacity, in strengthening economic performance and in protecting the environment, thus laying firm foundations for a better future for all African people.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Argentina is participating in this debate for three basic reasons. The first reason is that we believe that in doing so it is paying tribute to a very important sector of the United Nations, without whose substantial contribution practically no change would have been possible in the General Assembly. Specifically, without the initiative and support of African countries on questions such as disarmament, human rights, development and the environment, to cite a few examples, these issues would not have been aired or dealt with successfully in our Organization.

The African Group, by its imposing numbers, has been the architect of the most important progress made in

the United Nations. In close alliance with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and other regional groups, it laid firm foundations for the effective consideration of many of the conflicts that the United Nations has witnessed and continues to witness.

For all these reasons, we think the time is now ripe for the United Nations to begin to devise a way to return to the African Group and to Africa some part of the great contributions they have made to date. We particularly believe that we should promote all the initiatives that can catalyse the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Those initiatives should provide structural opportunities for development and not merely try to counteract the consequences of poverty.

The second reason why we are participating in this debate is to support the report (A/51/228) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Accordingly, to consider the thoughts put forward by the Secretary-General in the summary section of that document are very important. Priority problems are mentioned, such as good governance, the development of human resources and public savings: in sum, everything that falls under the heading of democracy and responsibility in African countries.

The Secretary-General also mentions the need to settle the disputes that afflict the countries of that continent. In this connection, we believe that Africa has provided the international community with extremely valuable examples applicable to the settlement of current conflicts without violence.

We must ask ourselves how it was possible for Africa to assimilate the legacy of decolonization and the problems of apartheid and territorial conflict — which by their very essence are very difficult to solve — and now, on the other hand, finds itself faced with violent and apparently insoluble problems within its own communities. There appears to us to be an inconsistency between the problems African countries, Governments and peoples overcame not long ago and the African problems appearing today on the political agenda of the United Nations.

Success in reforms, promotion of the private sector and direct foreign investment, increased activity in the democratic process and the strengthening of civilian society are essential elements of an Agenda for Development, and to a large extent depend on the support of the international community, in terms of resources and political will. We would therefore like to congratulate the Government of Japan for having convened a series of meetings to establish the bases for defining the terms of international cooperation. We find it important — indeed, essential — in this debate to note the conclusions recently reached at the high-level Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

We also attach importance to the activities announced by the Group of 7 in Lyon, France, and to the decisions adopted within the framework of the Bretton Woods financial institutions to relieve the external debt burden of African States.

Finally, in the context of the upcoming World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting to be held in Singapore, it is essential for the future of Africa and the rest of the developing world that the increased opening of markets under way in our countries be accompanied by a genuine, far-reaching elimination of the trade barriers that still exist, thus ensuring access for the products of developing countries.

The third reason why we are participating in this debate is to initiate thinking on the potential for cooperation between Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. In this connection, I believe that both regions have a large degree of agreement on the major themes. One of these, for example, is security. The signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba at Cairo, Egypt, last April is a new contribution towards the final goal of fully eliminating nuclear weapons. There are many other points and many other issues on which there is agreement.

With regard to Argentina and Africa, some years ago we set up a fund for horizontal cooperation. Some of its resources are oriented directly to Africa, and currently there are over 70 projects under way. They include various activities, such as training for agricultural and livestock work, pest eradication, cross-breeding and even computer science, State reform and privatization.

Along other lines, Argentina has been, is and will be participating in peacekeeping operations in Africa and in all humanitarian and medical assistance activities where it may be of assistance.

Finally, I would like to clarify that all these problems are universal. Latin America is not exempt from them, nor is Argentina. This is why we are so

sensitive to the problems of Africa and have such a strong sense of solidarity with Africa.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation on the whole takes a positive view of the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In our view, this document objectively reflects the situation at the half-way point in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and contains a number of useful and specific proposals and recommendations.

Since the launch of UN-NADAF, a number of countries on the African continent have made real progress in social and economic development, thanks to efforts at the national, regional and international levels. The number of countries with negative growth rates has decreased substantially and, indeed, there has been marked increase in the number of relatively successful countries in which annual rates of growth in gross national product have reached 6 per cent.

The monetary reforms carried out in many countries on the continent, steps taken to strengthen financial management structures, as well as measures to increase the efficiency and transparency of the tax system have all contributed to the stabilization. Such steps, among others, represent additional incentives for potential investors.

However, it is still too early to celebrate. Rather, it is time to consider the fundamental causes of the persistently critical economic situation that prevails on the continent, the growing unemployment and the spread of poverty.

Like many others, we are concerned that in the four years since the initiation of UN-NADAF, the targets set for the mobilization of financial resources have been only partially achieved. This relates to the volume of domestic savings, the persistently high level of external debt, and the fall in official development assistance.

We have taken note of the report's conclusion that in a number of African countries there was an increase in foreign direct investment, the returns on which were much higher than in other regions. There are prospects for an increase in the flow of investments as economic reform is implemented and as the investment climate improves. In this context, a positive assessment should be given to the efforts made by numerous African countries to introduce accelerated procedures for the registration of investment applications — one-stop institutions — and to the expansion of the establishment of export-processing zones offering special concessional packages of services for the generation of income in the production and trade sectors.

Without the settlement of the numerous conflicts in Africa and the assurance of political stability, the African development strategy cannot be achieved. At the time we welcomed the establishment by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of a mechanism for conflict prevention and early resolution. Its work is designed to ease the efforts of the international community in peacemaking and eliminating humanitarian crises, and thus to facilitate the mobilization of resources for the development of Africa. Unfortunately, the planned potential of this mechanism has not yet been fully realized.

Destabilizing trends have assumed a particular significance today in connection with the events in the Great Lakes region, which threaten a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented dimensions. The international community must take urgent measures to prevent this and then tackle the roots of instability in this region, including ethnic tensions, poverty and underdevelopment. Development is the pathway to stability. The planned 10-year United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is particularly important in this regard, as it provides for the World Bank to play a coordinating role in the mobilization of the resources needed for its implementation.

Russia is making a contribution, to the extent possible, to the provision of humanitarian assistance in the African continent. We not only provide aid during humanitarian operations, but also give equipment and vehicles in response to the needs of the countries concerned.

Multilateral and bilateral cooperation in Africa is characterized by many overlapping and complementary programmes and operations. In this connection, we attach crucial importance to the report's emphasis on the need to prevent the dissipation of efforts. The best way to ensure this, in our view, is to enhance the coordinating role of the United Nations in providing assistance to Africa.

An important element for the successful development of the African economy is the strengthening of coordination among the donor countries and the many

international agencies to ensure teamwork in the implementation — tailored to conditions in Africa — of the recommendations of recent world forums on the theme of social and economic development.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Whatever may be said about the critical economic situation of African countries and the problems they face, their causes and effects, there is no doubt that we all agree on their seriousness and the need to find the right solutions to them in order to avoid consequences that could jeopardize international peace and security.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, was a good initiative aimed at giving the international community the opportunity to review the deteriorating economic and social conditions on the African continent with a view to finding the proper solutions for them and to renewing the commitment to support Africa's efforts to achieve continued economic growth and sustainable development.

All of us are aware that there are intrinsic reasons that contributed to the aggravation of these problems and negatively influenced Africa's development plans. Foremost among them is the colonialism to which the countries of the continent were long subjected, during which their natural and human resources were drained and their markets cruelly monopolized. Not only were Africa's minerals and raw materials exported abroad, but Africans themselves were shipped across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to contribute to the economic and industrial development of Europe and the United States.

When, after arduous struggles and many sacrifices, African peoples finally obtained their political independence, they found that they were the poorest peoples and that their continent was the poorest of continents. Africa has 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries. Yet the draining of Africa's resources has continued in different forms, the worst of which has been the continually low prices of its exported raw materials and the continual rise in the prices of manufactured goods it imports. As a result, African countries have had to borrow money in order to achieve a measure of development to mitigate the poverty and deprivation suffered by their peoples. While most African countries are indebted, the truth is that they have repaid their debts many time over given the exorbitant interest rates imposed on them, which have increased Africa's external debts to $US 322 billion in 1995.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) has focused on realizing sustainable growth and accelerating progress in agricultural development, food security, human resources development, rural and urban development, the establishment and maintenance of infrastructures, the creation of the appropriate social environment, and the enhancement of regional economic cooperation.

The mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda finds that the situation in the African continent is still essentially a cause for concern. Population growth rates in many countries outstrip growth in the gross domestic product, and this in turn has negatively affected food security. Africa's share of international trade is very small indeed, indicating that the continent is not fully integrated in the world economy. Most African countries suffer from a very severe shortage of the domestic resources needed for development, because of the accumulation of external debt, the reduction in official development assistance, and restrictions on the transfer of technology and on access of their products to the markets of developed countries. Other contributory factors include civil wars and natural disasters, leading to the spread of poverty and unemployment, and the growing problem of refugees in the African continent, who now number more than 7 million.

As regards its economic and social development Africa has proved its sense of responsibility. Several African countries have embarked on long-term political and economic reforms. Some of these countries have achieved growth rates of 6 per cent of gross domestic product. Others have started to formulate and implement strategies for the eradication of poverty, as indicated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

However, progress so far has been slow and insufficient. Rates of economic growth are still very low in many African countries; rates of trade growth are deteriorating; the debt burden is accumulating; and poverty, unemployment and population growth are markedly on the rise. Endemic diseases are on the increase. This proves that five years after its adoption UN-NADAF has not been given the expected support by the international community. It is therefore incumbent upon donor countries, international financial institutions

and the United Nations system to create a favourable external environment to support national efforts in the implementation of the New Agenda — which was adopted by consensus. UN-NADAF requires the full support of the international community, which has morally committed itself to assist Africa economically and financially with a view to creating favourable conditions for an effective sustainable development that would compensate the peoples of Africa for all the hunger, disease, poverty, deprivation and ignorance they have suffered.

Western countries are in the debt of the African peoples, and they must shoulder their responsibilities. Indeed they will be the true beneficiaries of ending Africa's backwardness, because legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe would cease and a favourable situation would be created for reverse immigration of African talents from Europe to their own continent. This could result in an economic, industrial and agricultural renaissance that would make Africa a useful partner of Western countries through increased trade between Africa, Europe and other continents.

Although it is important to create favourable conditions for the flow of direct foreign capital to African countries, the owners of this capital should understand the needs and the problems of African countries and should focus on a number of priority questions, in particular the development of human resources conducive to a productive labour force, which is essential for economic growth, and support for self-development in society, based on the concept that human beings are the means and the ends of development.

Peace is a precondition for development. The two concepts are interrelated. In this context, my delegation notes that coercive economic measures and sanctions, in all their manifestations, imposed by certain developed countries against some African countries, such as mine, with a view to exercising political and economic coercion against those countries, in addition to the attempts by a big Power to impose its laws beyond its own territory, all run counter to the aims of development and peace. They violate the norms that govern coexistence among States.

Despite the coercive economic measures that have been imposed on my country for several years now, causing great hardship for its innocent people and obstructing its development plans in various sectors, my country does everything it can to support development in Africa, in the firm belief that cooperation and interdependence among African countries, especially in the economic field, is an option to which there is no alternative for the enhancement of development and progress in the African continent. My country has contributed to the implementation of several economic and social projects in Africa through the establishment of joint ventures and joint development banks in addition to giving several concessionary loans and donations to help address the consequences of natural disasters, desertification and epidemics. This is based on our belief in the importance of economic cooperation among African countries to enhance their capacity to achieve economic and social development. I wish to reaffirm that we will continue to meet our commitments to the development of Africa based on our unwavering policy towards the continent to which we belong, and based on our conviction that the continuation of the critical economic situation in Africa could jeopardize international peace and security.

We call upon the international community to show its solidarity with Africa by supporting UN-NADAF, which is the basis for cooperation among African countries, donor countries and international financial institutions based on the principle of shared responsibility, strengthening partnership and abandoning the policy of indifference and marginalization to which the continent is currently subjected. The support we call for is necessitated by humanitarian and ethical considerations towards a continent which has long suffered from colonialism, plunder, deprivation, backwardness, marginalization and exploitation.

In this context, I would like to recall the address by President Museveni of Uganda during the General Assembly commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in which he stated that:

> "Africa will develop whether or not Europe forgets Africa ... [Our] development does not depend on Europe's remembering us ... [It] is crucial that we in Africa solve these bottleneck problems and ... the factors within Africa that have stopped us from developing. The exogenous factors, those from outside Africa, are only secondary ...
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> "Does that mean that Europe should not help us? No, Europe should help us. First, the Europeans owe us debts. They caused us many problems. They came and plundered our economies. They used our economies to build themselves up so it is a moral requirement that Europe should help us if only to pay for past mistakes." (*Official Records of the*

General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, 37th plenary meeting, p. 2)

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I am pleased to address the General Assembly concerning implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We are at the midpoint — halfway between the launching of the New Agenda five years ago and its end point early in the next century. More broadly, we are in the midst of a great historic transition, as cold-war divisions fade and the new realities of our own era are more clearly defined.

Earlier this year, I travelled to Africa, visiting Liberia, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi — all countries about which the United Nations has been deeply concerned. This visit reinforced for me the belief that in this new era the peoples of the world have many important interests in common. The New Agenda for development in Africa is one of them.

Clearly, taken as a whole, Africa remains deeply troubled. It faces daunting problems, including civil strife, a large foreign debt, increasing populations dependent on decreasing amounts of usable land, and an inadequate flow of investment.

Our shared goal, reflected in the New Agenda, is to bring down these and other barriers to growth, working both at the national and international levels, not overnight, but over a period of time during which steady progress is made. We work together towards this end because we know that an Africa that is progressively more free, stable, productive and prosperous will benefit every segment of the world community. It will promote sustainable development at the national level aimed at alleviating poverty, combating hunger and disease, providing education and jobs, and ending the discrimination that afflicts many people on the continent, holding them back from realizing their full human potential.

It will enhance the climate of cooperation that has led recently to the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the approval of a ban on nuclear tests. It will make it easier for African nations to fight back against the transnational networks of crime, narcotics and terror that imperil every continent. It will help Africa to preserve its rich bounty of natural resources and thereby add to the health and sustainability of our global environment. It will lend further momentum to the trend towards more open economic and political systems that is the defining characteristic of this decade. And it will contribute, through expanded commerce and a more efficient use of resources, to a rising standard of living not only for the people of Africa, but for all people.

Over the past decade, guided by a process of ongoing dialogue and by conference deliberations in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and Istanbul, the world has narrowed past disagreements and moved closer to consensus on issues related to human development. It is from this basis of common ground that we now review the New Agenda for the development of Africa.

As the mid-term review indicates, we have come to understand that economic development, social development, environmental protection and conservation are mutually reinforcing. They are each elements of sustainable development, and they each add to our quality of life.

We know also that the primary impetus for economic growth in Africa, as elsewhere, must come from the private sector. It is encouraging, therefore, that many Governments in Africa are facilitating growth by creating monetary, regulatory and legal policies that allow legitimate private enterprises to take hold. They are also making choices that maximize available resources through investments in education and health, and that expand access for women to the levers of economic and political power. As a result, the economic outlook in Africa is improving. After three years of decline, the continent experienced real gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 1.9 per cent in 1994 and 3.2 per cent in 1995. Real per capita growth was positive last year, for the first time in six years.

These gains would not have been possible without a commitment by many African Governments to economic and political reform. If Africa is to move forward, that trend must continue and broaden.

Momentum towards democracy in Africa must also continue. People on every continent have learned that democracy is a parent to development. That is because development depends on people, and people who are free to exchange ideas, publish their thoughts, organize their labour and invest their capital will contribute far more to a society than those shackled by repression.

Since 1989, more than 20 African nations have embraced democratic government, including South Africa, whose peaceful transition from apartheid to multi-party democracy is one of the landmarks of this century. Certainly, we must agree with former President Soglo of Benin that, when it comes to democracy, Africa cannot afford to be held to a lesser standard than other regions.

In the same manner, the world must do all it can to help Governments and non-governmental organizations within the region to strengthen civil society. By so doing, we enhance the rule of law, protect human rights and create the kind of stability in which local entrepreneurs can thrive and outside investors can have confidence.

Finally, we have established common ground about the need to cooperate to end the conflicts that still plague Africa, retarding development and causing immense human suffering. Here again Africans must play the lead role. No outside force, even if regionally based, can impose peace on those who do not desire peace.

My Government has pledged to help interested African States to increase their capacity for responding to conflicts through an African crisis response force.

We are supporting strongly the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Angola. We are seeking a worldwide agreement to end the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, which have been especially devastating to Africans. And we are lending strong diplomatic support to initiatives originating in the region that aim at preventing further bloodshed in trouble spots such as Burundi and Liberia.

We know that in Africa, as elsewhere, one of the great challenges we face is controlling ethnic hate and curbing extreme nationalism. Despite the current problems in Central Africa, Africans generally have much to teach the world about the peaceful resolution of ethnic differences. Together, we must get across the principle — the truth — that what matters most everywhere is not the distinctions that divide us, but the common humanity that binds us. And we must find practical means to help those working to bring peace and achieve reconciliation in places now threatened or racked by conflict.

Today, five years after it was launched, the New Agenda for the development of Africa retains its significance. The world must work together to help Africa realize its full potential. Although this effort cannot succeed without wise and forward-looking African leaders, neither can the many leaders who merit that description succeed without the partnership of international institutions and overseas friends.

Accordingly, my Government continues to support the New Agenda; we endorse the mid-term report and its recommendations; and we will continue to participate actively and cooperatively in its implementation.

We also support the Special Initiative for Africa announced this spring as a means for implementing the New Agenda.

We will strive, with others, to enhance food security in Africa and to see that commitments made at this month's World Food Summit are kept. We will work towards the integration of Africa into the world's economy, and, where we can, will help deserving countries to meet the rules and requirements of the World Trade Organization.

Official development assistance, both bilateral and through the operational activities of the United Nations, and multilateral lending will continue to be essential to support national efforts by African countries. They are most effective when they supplement and promote private sector participation and leverage private capital flows. Reform of these United Nations funds and programmes can ensure greater efficiency, delivering more resources on the ground to finance development.

Finally, we will continue to participate in efforts to ease the debt burdens borne by the world's poorest countries, especially those whose Governments are committed to policies of economic and political reform. To this end, the United States has forgiven more than $1.2 billion in debt owed by 19 countries. We also joined in approving the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement to provide enhanced debt relief for the most heavily indebted poor countries.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Today the greatest divide in the world is not between East and West or North and South or left and right. It is between those trapped by the grievances and preconceptions of the past, and those who have the vision and courage to shape the future.

As we prepare for the twenty-first century, we know that the key to the future of Africa is not donor-led development, as some have insisted in the past, but rather

development, based on the rule of law and full respect for human rights, that is led by the private sector and guided by a new generation of forward-looking African leaders working in partnership with international institutions, non-governmental organizations and Governments around the world.

Together, let us pledge that, five years from now, when we look back in this body upon the completion of the New Agenda, we will each be able to say that we did our part to end conflict, strengthen democracy, promote reform, and create opportunity for all the people of Africa and by so doing, to help people everywhere live richer, freer and more rewarding lives.

Mr. Muhammed (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset to convey the congratulations of my delegation to His Excellency Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan, His Excellency Ambassador Denis Dangue Rewaka, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Gabon, and His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana for their contributions to the successful conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which took place last September at United Nations Headquarters.

The outcome of the review process demonstrated how much African Governments and the international community need to strengthen their partnership to put the African continent on a sustainable path of social and economic development. The review places a formidable challenge before us, as partners in the development of Africa. My delegation therefore takes this opportunity to call for a renewed and fresh commitment by the international community to the accelerated implementation of the programme of action envisaged in UN-NADAF for the rest of the decade. The specific areas of concern that should be addressed as a matter of priority both by African countries and by the international community have been very well defined in the review exercise. It is with that understanding and trust that my delegation would like to highlight certain aspects of the mid-term review.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was a political compact between the African countries and the international community, aimed at fostering the economic and social progress of Africa through transformation, integration and diversification. It further aims at reducing the vulnerability of the African economy to external shocks and at internalizing a self-reliant process of development. An average actual growth rate of 6 per cent per annum for gross national product was also set as a target. However, the review outcome explicitly demonstrated that much more remains to be done in the future to achieve the objectives of UN-NADAF.

In an effort to benefit from the increasingly globalized and liberalized world economy, African countries have undertaken major structural adjustment and wide-ranging economic reforms within agreed structural and sectoral frameworks. They have also been taking parallel measures to strengthen democratic reforms. Notwithstanding the commitment of many African countries to securing peace and macroeconomic stability, sometimes at great political risk and with tremendous social hardship, the gains of reform fall short of expectations. African countries continue to be marginalized and have not been effectively integrated into the world economy. Poverty has grown in magnitude and severity. Except for modest recovery and growth in a few African countries, the per capita income growth of the majority is far below the target set in UN-NADAF.

These deteriorating trends stem in part from a steady decline in international support and cooperation. Official development assistance is at the lowest level in 20 years. Official development assistance is now only 0.25 per cent of the combined gross national product of all countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development as compared to the 0.7 per cent target set at the United Nations in 1970; that has taken a heavy toll, particularly on African development.

The aggregate net resource flow to Africa — official development assistance and other — amounted to only $31 billion in 1995, of which $26.4 billion was official development assistance. That shows vividly how Africa depends primarily on a single source of resource transfer, which, unfortunately, has shown a considerable decline in recent years. It is therefore essential to maintain an increased and consistent level of official development assistance of improved quality and quantity. The donor community has to respect and fulfil its commitment by achieving the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, including the agreed menu of aid targets and commitments, as set out in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s.

Likewise, the African countries together received only about 2 per cent of global capital flows, despite their best endeavours to attract private investment through painful structural adjustment programmes and liberalization of their economies. Recent economic analyses attribute these very low levels of investment flows to Africa to the accumulation of such factors as poor infrastructure, poor telecommunication systems and the lack of utilities. It is clear, therefore, that the prevailing weak physical, social and institutional infrastructure in Africa needs to be improved to bring about a significant shift in the direction of foreign investment. African countries need financial, technical and other support from the international community, not only for the execution of their social programmes, but also for the development of their infrastructures that help improve the investment environment.

The new international trading system is one of the areas in which the marginalization of Africa has become glaringly evident. Unless the current unfavourable international trading pattern changes to accommodate the commodity and other trade interests of Africa, meaningful development efforts are not imaginable. For the enhancement of African participation in international trade, access to the markets of the developed world is crucial. Urgent actions aimed at diversifying African commodities and removing tariff and non-tariff barriers need to be taken to strengthen the competitiveness of African countries in world trade.

The debt problem is still with us, and remains a formidable challenge to African economic recovery and development. The debt-servicing obligation of Africa drains a significant amount of scarce resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social development. Although the international community has striven to alleviate the debt burden of Africa through various debt-relief measures, including the Toronto and Naples terms, to date, none of them has been in a position to render durable solutions to the problem.

Even the most recent debt initiative announced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to alleviate the debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries, although it seems commendable, is not only insufficient but limited in scope. In addition, its eligibility criteria and conditionality are a source of concern. Therefore, without a new comprehensive debt strategy that goes beyond existing mechanisms, the implementation of UN-NADAF could be in jeopardy. We wish to reiterate the oft-repeated call for a once-and-for-all development-oriented approach that goes beyond the Naples terms and includes, among other measures, debt cancellation and debt-for-development exchanges.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies occupy a special place in ensuring coordinated follow-up in the monitoring of the implementation of UN-NADAF. The leading role of galvanizing the required synergy within the United Nations system must be given utmost priority. In this regard, the Economic Commission for Africa, which is a regional arm of the United Nations system, must be equipped with the necessary resources and logistic support to discharge its responsibility in the implementation of UN-NADAF in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system.

It is also imperative for the United Nations to coordinate with the Organization of African Unity, which played a leading role in the elaboration and implementation of the Abuja Treaty and the Cairo Agenda for Action to relaunch Africa's economic and social development.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize again the necessity of galvanizing the political and economic commitment of the international community to provide concrete, full support to such a noble programme as UN-NADAF.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): In adopting the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in 1991, this Assembly posed a crucial challenge to Africa and the entire international community. Canada's support for the New Agenda, and our active participation in the review process, can be explained by one simple consideration: our enduring commitment to Africa. This commitment is reflected in the vital and multifaceted relations that we have with African Governments both at the bilateral level and through a range of multilateral agencies, and which take the form of the continuing engagement of Canadian non-governmental organizations throughout the continent, and growing number of partnerships in the private sector.

As the report of September's mid-term review meeting underlines — and African Governments rightly insist on this — the primary responsibility for African development rests with Africa. United Nations agencies, partner countries such as Canada, and international business and non-governmental organizations have a role to play, but it is necessarily a complementary one. They can do no more — and must do no less — than support

the leadership of African Governments and citizens in shaping their own development.

Leadership and the spirit of initiative in African countries have produced many positive developments in recent years. In his report the Secretary-General observed that there has been significant improvement in public administration in Africa in recent years. There has been a new pragmatism and competence in economic management, a renewed commitment to making poverty reduction a top priority of social policy, and remarkable progress in political liberalization, including a greater place for civil society in social and economic policy, as well as Government accountability. Such good news seldom makes headlines — however, it should.

(spoke in English)

The Secretary-General has also observed — and this cannot be overstated — that civil conflict continues to have a major impact on development in Africa. Recent conflicts have entailed tragic human costs; but they also entail massive costs in terms of the political attention and resources that must be devoted to them by the international community. This reinforces the need to continue our efforts to strengthen United Nations conflict prevention and conflict resolution capabilities. The Secretary-General has shown leadership in this regard with his appointment of a Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region. He has, of course, Canada's full support in this undertaking.

To surmount internal and external conflicts, there is no substitute for home-grown political will. The Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is an important step in this direction, which Canada has welcomed and has supported financially. In a similar vein, at the recent Ottawa Conference on anti-personnel landmines, several African countries made key contributions, including an African regional component to the agreed Plan of Action. It is hoped that a treaty totally banning landmines can be signed by the end of 1997. Until the millions of landmines are removed, in particular from rural agricultural land in Angola and Mozambique, economic and social development in those countries will be sorely hampered.

Development assistance remains an important factor in Africa's economic development. For its part, Canada allocates 44 per cent of its bilateral aid to Africa. But this is only one element of the solution. As the September mid-term review states, efforts to promote the private sector and foreign direct investment must be accelerated. This can best be achieved when there is an open, transparent domestic system in place, and when the private sector and civil society are fully engaged in the process. Canada thus encourages such activities as the International Finance Corporation's Extending the Reach programme. And we are increasingly witnessing significant direct investment by Canadian companies in numerous African countries.

One result of the mid-term review should be a further streamlining of the United Nations system's implementation of UN-NADAF. The cause of African development will not be served through a proliferation of parallel or competing implementation strategies. The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa should thus be approached as a complement to UN-NADAF, strengthening the implementation of its programme elements.

We are especially pleased to observe that the United Nations and the international financial institutions have been working together more effectively. We trust this cooperation will deepen, enhancing the implementation of UN-NADAF. Canada welcomes the comprehensive debt relief initiative for heavily indebted poor countries agreed to at the recent annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Heavily indebted poor countries, many of which are in Africa, will now be returned to debt sustainability within a reasonable time-frame. Canada was also pleased to participate in the seventh African Development Fund replenishment negotiations in May and to contribute to the additional special subscription in June.

To conclude, this mid-term review has demonstrated the continuing validity and urgency of the objectives set five years ago by the New Agenda for Development in Africa. And the conclusions of the Ad Hoc Committee's September meeting afford a sound basis for pursuing those objectives with renewed focus in the years ahead. Canada pledges its continued support for this enterprise and stands ready to work in partnership — with the countries of Africa, regional institutions and the United Nations — in addressing the crucial challenges of development in Africa.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the reports that have been made available for the consideration of this agenda item, both during the mid-term review session and in this Assembly. We wish to place on record our gratitude to the members of the Bureau of the mid-term review

session held from 16 to 20 September 1996. In particular, we would like to thank Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan for ably steering the review session. We appreciate the untiring efforts of the Government of Japan to seek solutions to Africa's development problems.

The mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was intended to assess the implementation of the Agenda, to identify obstacles to its prompt implementation, and to recommend ways of ensuring effective implementation of its remaining portions. The review session noted that in accordance with the commitments made under UN-NADAF, African countries had undertaken various political and economic reforms which had contributed to the achievement of economic growth over the past few years. It was further observed that the international community, including the United Nations system, had provided African countries with some support. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Agenda had faced serious obstacles, which had prevented the achievement of set targets. Among other things, African countries had experienced considerable difficulties in attracting the requisite foreign direct investment, and had also been unable to ensure adequate access of their populations to education, health and related social services.

Regarding resource mobilization, the review showed that net disbursements of official development assistance had decreased from about $24 billion in 1991 to $21.9 billion in 1994, before increasing to $26.4 billion in 1995, whereas UN-NADAF had projected a minimum of $30 billion in 1992. The total external debt of Africa also rose from $300 billion in 1991 to about $322 billion in 1995, while Africa's share of world countries' trade declined from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 2.1 per cent in 1995. Implementation of the Agenda was further hampered by shortcomings at the advocacy and institutional levels as a result of lack of clear mandates and insufficient resources.

It is the hope of my delegation that the obstacles mentioned above will be removed and efforts made by all parties to ensure full and timely implementation of the Agenda. African countries will continue, among other things, to pursue the necessary programmes to deepen ongoing reforms, engage in more aggressive investment promotion activities, ensure democratization, and strengthen human resources and capacities for sustainable development.

While acknowledging that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Agenda lies at the national level, we call on the international community to provide the necessary financial resources in accordance with its commitments under the Agenda. These include the provision of official development assistance at an annual rate of $30 billion, to be increased by 4 per cent per annum; the adoption of an effective international debt strategy to address the unsustainable debt of Africa; support for the development of trade infrastructures; the removal of trade barriers; and support for commodity diversification efforts and regional cooperation. In translating the recommendations of the review session into action, my delegation wishes to stress the need to be guided by time-frames for specific targets, bearing in mind that the Agenda has only five more years to run.

It will be most unfortunate for this august Assembly to convene in five years' time at the end of the implementation period, only to acknowledge again that implementation of the Agenda has been behind schedule. To avoid such a situation, and to ensure timely implementation, we wish to recommend that the Secretary-General provide to this Assembly an annual report on the state of implementation of the Agenda, indicating specific action that has been taken by all parties to achieve set targets. This recommendation implies the inclusion on an annual basis for the next five years of an agenda item on this subject. We believe that regular assessment of the implementation of the Agenda will also enable us to determine whether we are on track, and assist us in speeding up where implementation is delayed.

Finally, my delegation expresses the hope that the relevant United Nations bodies responsible for follow-up will be provided with the requisite resources to enable them to undertake their function of improving follow-up and monitoring the implementation of the Agenda.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): Only a few weeks ago, the international community carried out the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). In this connection, I wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Owada of Japan, who so ably chaired the review proceedings, as well as to the entire Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Mid-term Review. Five years after the launching of the New Agenda, the review gave us an opportunity to take fresh stock of the distance we have travelled together and assess what was needed to achieve the objectives we set for ourselves. We therefore welcome this opportunity to exchange views on this subject of critical importance to the African people.

In recognition of the fact that we, the African people, bear the primary responsibility for our own development, we have undertaken various measures to restructure and liberalize our economies at enormous social and political cost. A lot has also been achieved in terms of promoting freedom, social justice, peace and security. The reports presented during the mid-term review exercise bore clear testimony to the fact that the African countries have largely fulfilled their part of the compact. These ambitious and painful reforms will certainly founder if our development partners fail to augment our sterling efforts.

As I observed in my statement during the mid-term review, in many parts of Africa the dawn of an unprecedented era of peace and tranquillity has allowed us to refocus attention and deploy scarce resources towards economic development. However, these peaceful conditions cannot be fully secured without the requisite undergirding of economic development. Development is a sine qua non for international peace and security. We believe that the economic situation in Africa is at a critical juncture and calls for decisive intervention by the international community. An economically vibrant and prosperous Africa is an asset to the world economy. It enhances the possibilities for a peaceful and secure human existence because poverty, deprivation and want are fertile ground for political instability and social decay. As the international community hatches and launches one ineffective initiative after another, that dark cloud hovering over much of Africa threatens to drag us back into the abyss of political instability and even deeper political ruin. The question that this Assembly should ask itself is whether we need to wait until catastrophes manifest themselves in unsightly and gruesome television images in our living rooms.

The mid-term review of UN-NADAF demonstrated that not much had been done to attain the specific targets that we had collectively set for ourselves. We call on our development partners to honour their obligations if we are to rescue the New Agenda from the disastrous failure that it appears to be headed towards. UN-NADAF stands the very real risk of experiencing the fate that befell its predecessor, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD).

While we concede that official development assistance is a crucial part of overall development assistance to Africa, we also remain firm in our conviction that it cannot and should not continue to be the decisive factor that it currently is in our development strategy. We prefer a genuine partnership in trade and not the surrogate role of recipients of aid. And so we are asking how we can prosper if our few exports are denied market access by the high wall of protectionist barriers in developed countries. In order for the African countries fully to benefit from the new multilateral trade regime and the increasingly integrated global economy, the developed countries should abandon their protectionist policies. The sad truth is that while the benefits to African countries from the new multilateral trade regime are far from being assured, what we are certain about is that, in the short and medium term, African countries will suffer substantial losses. The international community should take urgent measures to alleviate the adverse impact of this trend. Equal competition among grossly unequal partners is unfair competition. There is need for affirmative action on behalf of Africa, the weakest link in the emerging global partnership.

We think it is disingenuous for our development partners to insist that African countries meet all their debt obligations to the penny when these payments are gobbling up all our export earnings. We believe that there is a clear and direct relationship between Africa's unsustainable debt burden and the flight from the region of financial resources necessary for economic recovery, growth and development. Many African countries are having to squeeze their people to the point of malnutrition or starvation to meet their debt obligations. Given this unsustainable debt burden, it is good economic sense to give us the opportunity to retain the larger part of our export earnings for reinvestment in our economies.

At the mid-term review, we dwelt at considerable length on the mobilization of domestic and international resources for development. What we find curious is that the outcome of the review process fails to acknowledge the fact that, for most African countries, there is actually a net outflow of resources. In view of the capital flight, we should again ask a rhetorical question: How are we expected to develop if we cannot reinvest our meagre export earnings? We need to arrest and reverse the capital flight that has hamstrung and undermined our efforts to save and to reinvest in our economies. We believe that genuine development is that which is born of and spurred by our own entrepreneurship, creative potential, and by the genius and industry of our own people. But, as I have already said, we Africans are getting dwindling volumes of aid and losing all of it through debt servicing.

Development, as described by the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe in his address before the Assembly in September 1996, is meaningless if it fails to bring food to our dining tables, clean water into our homes, better housing, improved health and peace of mind and security to our children. It is not about statistics. No volume of words, resolutions, conferences or programmes of action can in themselves bring the reality of economic development to Africa. What we need are not empty protestations of solidarity but international development cooperation that transcends the realm of fruitless discourse and manifests itself in concrete terms through discernible improvements in the lives of ordinary men, women and children.

Finally, I wish to conclude by drawing the attention of the participants to an evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for Africa that was conducted by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit. There are also comments on that report by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly for the first time to express Benin's position on item 44 of our agenda, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The delegation of Benin fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the African countries by the Ambassador of Cameroon and with some of the views expressed by the representatives who spoke earlier on this item, whose importance and relevance are self-evident.

From 16 to 20 September last, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly established by resolution 50/160 A, proceeded to the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) under the chairmanship of Ambassador Owada of Japan and with the assistance of the other members of the Bureau, namely the ambassadors of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Gabon and Guyana. I should like, on behalf of my Government and in my personal capacity, to congratulate them on the quality of their work and for their dedication to championing the causes and the interests of Africa.

On 18 December 1991, after the adoption of UN-NADAF by resolution 46/151, the late Ambassador of Norway, Martin Huslid — and here I pay tribute to his memory — stated that in subscribing to the United Nations New Agenda on the Development of Africa in the 1990s,

> "the international community accepts the principles of shared responsibility and full partnership with Africa" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings, 77th meeting, p. 18-20)*

and that it committed itself to giving full and tangible support to the African efforts.

It should be recognized, in one way or another, that the adoption of the New Agenda was accompanied by a heightened awareness, on the political level, of the special situation and particular needs of Africa. These priority items for the international community are addressed in the declarations and programmes of action of the major summits and conferences organized by the United Nations, in international legal instruments concerning the environment and in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

We have no doubt that the next World Food Summit, to be held from 13 to 17 November 1996 in Rome, will emphasize the same concerns.

Furthermore, at the World Summit for Social Development, Heads of State and Government stated in Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration:

> "We commit ourselves to accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries." *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 21)*

Everything leads us to believe that the solemn commitment undertaken by the General Assembly in December 1991 and confirmed by the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995 is of pivotal political importance. Moreover, the Secretary-General has often emphasized and recalled that, in accordance with the programme adopted by joint agreement, Africa is one of the five priorities of the United Nations in the 1990s.

This is one of the basic reasons for the launching in March 1996 of the Special Initiative of the United Nations on Africa, which is designed to promote and to step up the attainment of the objectives set out by the General Assembly within the framework of UN-NADAF.

We note with regret at the mid-term review that, despite this promising political backdrop and the clear will of the African countries to extricate themselves from underdevelopment, UN-NADAF has experienced only an embryonic implementation — or at the very least a fragmentary one. In other words, very few actions or specific steps have followed the litany of declarations, speeches and promises made since the start of this decade.

Attempts by African delegations to secure the adoption by consensus of a resolution calling for the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities within the framework of the implementation of the UN-NADAF chapter dealing with support for the diversification of African economies have encountered a dogged, unjustified and somewhat contemptuous refusal on the part of certain delegations of members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The delegation of Benin would like to hope that the next five years of the implementation of UN-NADAF will be successful insofar as the mid-term review has allowed us to reaffirm and to emphasize the reciprocal nature of commitments and responsibilities, and the need for Africa and the international community urgently to take concrete measures such as those put forward in resolution 46/151 (1991) and reiterated by the mid-term review. It is thus clear that a great deal remains to be done to achieve at least the priority objectives of UN-NADAF, including the effective and total integration of Africa into the world economy.

The mid-term review took place in the context of the globalization of the economy and of the liberalization of trade, which presents opportunities and challenges as well as risks and uncertainty. The risk of further marginalization for Africa is today a real one. This is more than ever the time to make a concerted effort on the global level to establish an international atmosphere favourable to the integration of Africa and of the least developed countries in general into the world economy. The establishment of such an atmosphere requires, *inter alia*, necessary measures to cancel public or bilateral debt; to substantially reduce multilateral debt — which for many African countries has quadrupled within a decade; and to reschedule, if not reduce or wipe out, commercial debt. There is a need to find effective, favourable and lasting solutions to the external debt problem of African countries.

There is a need to redirect the objectives of policies and programmes of structural adjustment towards social development, in particular the elimination of poverty, the creation of productive jobs and the strengthening of social integration.

There is a need to achieve the objective of 0.7 per cent of developed countries' gross national products for official development assistance for developing countries, with 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to be devoted to the least developed countries, of which 33 out of 48 are African countries. There is a need to implement effectively and in a timely manner the commitments undertaken by the international community with regard to the specific needs and problems of Africa.

It is clear that these measures must be complemented by considerable efforts on the part of African countries. I should like here to refer to the need firmly to root and consolidate the process of democratization, which fortunately today covers the entire African continent. This will allow for greater awareness regarding respect for and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for a greater concern for good public administration in a spirit of transparency, justice, credibility, equality and equity.

Benin began its democratic process after the historic conference of the vital forces of the nation in February 1990, well before the 1991 adoption of UN-NADAF. Our move forward to consolidate our new democratic experience has turned out to be entirely consistent with the objectives of UN-NADAF. The Government of Benin keenly hopes to benefit further from the assistance and support of the entire international community, the United Nations system, multilateral financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and all the other elements of civil society throughout the world in order to conclude successfully its programme of building a State truly based on the rule of law and a prosperous nation in which all the citizens of Benin will soon share a minimum level of well-being.

We are aware that the mere satisfaction of the ritual demands of electoral consultations, the implementation of the principle of orderly change of government, the establishment and respect for democratic institutions and checks and balances provided by our Constitution will not suffice to consolidate and guarantee democracy once and for all in Benin and in other African countries.

I would be remiss if I were to conclude my statement without highlighting the quality of the work carried out by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, for the

advancement, implementation and follow-up of the objectives, measures, activities and recommendations of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In the light of the positive conclusions of the mid-term review, my delegation would like to appeal for the strengthening of that Office with the human, financial and material resources required to pursue its mandate.

Indeed, the sudden disappearance of the division for least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing States from the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development after its ninth session, held at Midrand, South Africa, continues to be a cause of serious concern for us. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries is now the sole entity of the Secretariat which is in charge of the advancement, implementation and follow-up of UN-NADAF on the international level. We hope that reforms now under way will contribute to the greater visibility of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Finally, like numerous preceding speakers, I would like to hail the initiatives, activities and projects undertaken by the United Nations system for the development of Africa, as well as the activities and actions undertaken by all of Africa's development partners, including the non-governmental actors which have made the economic recovery and development of Africa one of their priorities.

Thus, I would like to appeal to all States that the results of the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF be scrupulously applied to achieve the effective elimination of poverty, the diversification of our economies, the growth of direct foreign investment and a speeding up of the process of Africa's genuine integration into the system of liberalization of international trade and in the globalization of the economy.

Mr. Abibi (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which the General Assembly adopted unanimously on 18 December 1991 on the basis of the principles of shared responsibility and full association with Africa in the attainment of its objectives, constitutes an important political manifestation of the international community's solidarity with Africa.

At this point in my statement, I would like to associate myself with the well-deserved tribute paid to Ambassador Owada of Japan, as well as to the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, for the masterful manner in which they conducted the mid-term review.

The mid-term review of the implementation of this important political pact highlights not only the great sacrifices made by the African countries in introducing both structural and institutional reforms and the efforts of the international community to support economic recovery and social development in Africa, but also the long road that remains to be travelled to attain the main objectives of the programme.

The delegation of the Republic of Congo considers that the praiseworthy results already achieved should not conceal the many obstacles that remain to be overcome to attain true, lasting development in Africa. The essential goals of the New Agenda are far from being achieved. Despite glimmers of hope here and there on the continent, the economies of the African countries remain very vulnerable to external fluctuations. The development process is far from being endogenous. For the most part, as the excellent report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly emphasizes, many of the economic and social problems that led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development on 1 June 1986 and the New Agenda in 1991 remain acute. The mobilization of the necessary resources remains below the levels forecasted. The debt burden still saps many economic initiatives.

The mid-term review is occurring in an international context characterized by the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which presents Africa with both new opportunities and new challenges. The review should provide an opportunity for Africa and the international community not only to reaffirm their commitments of five years ago but also to adopt the necessary measures to accelerate the implementation of this important political contract.

Among the needs worthy of sustained attention on the part of Africa and its partners is the creation of a peaceful environment both within and among States. Peace is indeed a prerequisite for development. Because of the political instability and destruction it engenders, the persistence of armed conflict, civil war and ethnic rivalries is damaging to development efforts. In this regard, the delegation of the Republic of Congo supports the recommendation in the Ad Hoc Committee's report that the international community should continue to

support subregional and regional initiatives to settle conflicts.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s notes that Africa's economic and social development is primarily the responsibility of Africans. In an international environment characterized by the exacerbation of commercial, financial and cultural competition, in which international aid is becoming scarcer, strengthening the endogenous capacities of Africa is a healthy imperative to allow our continent to take its destiny into its own hands. The acquisition and mastery of the key resources of science and technology are crucial in this regard. The international community must resolutely pursue its efforts to help African countries make decisive progress in these areas.

The risks of marginalization of African countries remain a reality in an international context marked by a tendency to create broad blocks or large free-trade zones. Regional or subregional integration, by enabling Africa fully to exploit the complementary nature of its immense wealth, is an essential condition for its development. It is also a decisive factor for the peace and stability of the continent. Micro-nationalism, rural exodus, movements of populations or population explosions, even ethnic tensions and civil wars, forcefully emphasize the necessity for dynamic regional and subregional cooperation. We therefore welcome all recommendations aimed at consolidating initiatives that have been taken in this direction by African countries.

Whatever the reforms undertaken or the sacrifices made by Africa, all the goals of the New Agenda cannot be quickly achieved without sustained and significant support from the international community.

Africa has demonstrated that it stands ready to fulfil its part of the contract. It would like the international community to continue to play its role vigorously, so that together, in solidarity, we can find lasting solutions to the expectations of thousands and thousands of human beings struggling with hunger, poverty and natural catastrophes on the continent. As the moralist tells us, it is somewhat shameful to be happy in the midst of certain sufferings.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): There is no doubt whatsoever that Africa has been a grossly neglected continent. Its neglect by the international community in one way or another spawned a string of negative elements which have caused the stagnation of the growth and development of the countries of Africa, individually and collectively. Yet, Africa is a continent blessed with a plethora of natural resources.

The full economic and social utilization of those resources for the benefit of the peoples, to uplift them and create and maintain a better way of life, has been retarded by the severe impact of external debt and, concomitantly, debt-servicing costs, declining levels of official development assistance, reduced financial flows for investment and for industrial, business and commercial development, increasing barriers to trade and impaired access to the markets of the developed countries of the world.

The situation which the African continent has faced and faces is not unique to Africa alone. It is a tragedy faced by other regions and countries of the world, including my own region, the South Pacific.

In the case of my own country, for example, official development assistance from traditional and regional donors has declined and conditions are being imposed on the reduced aid levels. Trade balances with regional metropolitan centres weigh heavily in their favour, and yet hindrances are placed in the way of our access to their markets. Capital inflows for industrial, business and commercial development have declined.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the positive developments which have taken place on the continent over the past five years under the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The mid-term review mentions that since the implementation of the New Agenda, political, economic, structural and institutional reforms have been implemented in many countries. Closer regional and subregional economic cooperation has been established. The continent has seen increased democratization and the assumption at the regional and subregional levels of the role and responsibilities of leadership in conflict prevention, management and resolution. A number of African countries are beginning to formulate and implement strategies and policies aimed at the eradication of poverty.

On the other hand, my delegation notes with great concern that after five years, much of the Agenda has yet to be accomplished. Also of great concern is whether all of it can be fully accomplished in the next five years. The mid-term review states that many of the critical social and economic problems which led to the adoption of the New Agenda still exist and, in some countries,

have even worsened. Poverty and unemployment are expected to increase substantially. The estimated resource mobilization levels in the New Agenda are still far from being attained, and the key development goals have yet to be met.

The conclusion is obvious: the New Agenda has had a poor record of implementation. Accelerated progress in the implementation of the New Agenda over the next five years is clearly needed. My delegation joins in the call of the African countries to the international community, particularly the developed countries of the world, and to international organizations, to honour their commitments made under the Agenda.

It seems palpable to my delegation that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is intended to bridge the gap that exists in the implementation of the Agenda by coordinating the efforts between the international community, the Bretton Woods financial institutions and the United Nations on the issues of development.

We call upon the United Nations to exert every effort under the Initiative to ensure the full implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the coming five years. In the words of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the commitment to development must continue to be emphasized as the central objective of the work of the United Nations. The United Nations must reflect and embody the highest priority of most peoples and most nations; that priority today is development — sustainable, people-centred development.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): It is my great privilege to address the Assembly on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland on the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" (UN-NADAF). We commend the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for its comprehensive report on the status of the implementation of UN-NADAF, contained in document A/51/48.

With its unique approach, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was aimed at renewing the commitment of African countries and the international community to an agenda for the sustainable social and economic development of Africa in a spirit of global partnership based on shared responsibilities. The New Agenda sets out key targets to be achieved by the year 2001, and specifies a number of responsibilities and commitments for their achievement, to be discharged in a spirit of partnership between Africa and the international community. In this regard, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly has afforded us the opportunity to evaluate how much has actually been achieved to date.

Stark facts in the report reveal the distance both partners have to travel towards meeting the desired results by the year 2001. The mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda took place against the background of fundamental developments in international economic relations. While globalization and liberalization phenomena pose opportunities and challenges for the rest of the world, for Africa the fear of further marginalization, at least in the short term, is a reality. Coping with these challenges and living up to commitments in the various programmes of action is beyond our present means. Unfortunately, all this happens to coincide with an atmosphere of aid fatigue and severe budgetary pressures in the developed countries, with questions about the efficacy of international development cooperation, and with protectionist pressures seeking to undermine the theory of comparative advantage under the cloak of social and environmental causes.

African countries and the international community have taken a number of actions to achieve the objectives of UN-NADAF. The most remarkable efforts have come from African Governments which have undertaken major political and economic reforms. Democratization and good governance have been institutionalized in many African countries. The commitment of African Governments to political and economic reforms was further highlighted at the Seventeenth Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in March 1995, which adopted a declaration on relaunching Africa's economic and social development: the Cairo Agenda for Action.

For its part, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland commissioned a National Economic Review in 1994-1995, in which the private sector and community-based civic societies were among the major participants. This exercise was designed to identify areas likely to generate economic growth. Alongside our National Economic Review Commission is the Constitutional Review Commission, which was set up in July 1996 to review the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Africa's responsibility and commitment in the implementation of the programmes of UN-NADAF also include regional economic cooperation and integration, the creation of a climate conducive to attracting foreign investment, adopting people-centred development, protecting the environment, pursuing strategies aimed at achieving food security and the eradication of poverty, disease and illiteracy in the continent.

The international community, for its part, committed itself to assisting Africa in the provision of adequate resource flows for development and investment, diversification of primary commodities, and support for regional economic integration.

However, it is clear today that we are already far behind schedule in the realization of our goal.

The impact of these actions on overall African long-term development has been very minimal.

If we agree that long-term, sustained growth and sustainable development depend on the private sector and on attracting foreign direct investment, then we must identify a true incentive for investment, since Africa, despite its conducive climate, is still unable to attract foreign direct investment.

For most countries, the downward trend of recession has been arrested. Some have experienced a modest economic recovery. The New Agenda had estimated that $30 billion in official development assistance would be needed in 1992, and that this sum would need to grow by 4 per cent annually in order to sustain a gross national product (GNP) growth rate of 6 per cent per annum for sub-Saharan African countries. To date, official development assistance has been insufficient to jump-start, let alone sustain, African economic growth.

We therefore appeal to the developed countries to fulfil, as soon as possible, their commitment to attain the accepted United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of gross national for official development assistance, as stated in paragraph 60 of the report.

Africa's debt problem undermines any effort to improve our economic growth. It requires concrete and urgent measures to bring the burden to a manageable level. It is our view that, unless bold and innovative measures are taken by the multilateral institutions to reduce the debt, the negative economic situation will persist.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland believes that, in order to achieve meaningful and positive results for Africa by the year 2001, the political will that led to the adoption of UN-NADAF must be backed by the necessary means, in implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The continent of Africa is facing an economic war. Let our partners overseas recall that, during the Second World War, they recruited its sons to fight a war in Europe. That was done in a clear spirit of partnership. Some of us could have been born earlier, but, due to the Second World War, our birth was delayed because our forefathers were fighting a war overseas. Now is the time for those countries we were assisting overseas to come to Africa and join in fighting the war that is facing the continent. Our war is simple, because it kills no men. Those who come to assist us will return home alive. We ask our partners to come and support us in order to fight and win the economic war that is besetting the continent of Africa.

Mr. Suamin (Indonesia): Let me begin by extending our appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan for the helpful remarks he made in presenting his report as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We fully agree with him that the development of Africa is one of the major challenges in this post-cold-war era and that the economic take-off of Africa would not only improve the standard of living of its people, but would also have a positive impact on the world economy as a whole.

On that basis, I believe that we should approach the implementation of UN-NADAF in the second half of this decade bearing in mind the recommendations adopted at the mid-term review. In this context, I should like to say that the efforts of the African countries in implementing the Agenda over the past few years are highly commendable and should inspire the international community to greatly enhance its support for promoting UN-NADAF.

Yet despite the untiring efforts of the African countries, the Agenda has fallen short of expectations. A great deal remains to be done by the international

community. Shortcomings still abound and must be vigorously addressed if the implementation process of the New Agenda is to be revitalized and reinvigorated.

Our task at this session of the Assembly is to forge an agreement that the recommendations of the mid-term review be integrated into the Agenda for implementation in the second half of the decade. Since the points and recommendations of the report have already been well covered by the various delegations, especially by the African countries themselves and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I will confine myself to a few issues that my delegation considers important.

We note that the mid-term review of the New Agenda last September recommended an increased focus and concerted action to further enhance the implementation of the Agenda. However, in the present context, the African countries are faced with a perilous situation in which, unless the international community effectively and concretely addresses several core and global development issues, the prospects for the future are likely to be quite dim, and expectations may very well come to naught.

Let me therefore briefly focus on some of the areas in which we firmly believe that the international community should critically enhance its support for African development.

First, the financial resources committed to in the Agenda have fallen far short of expectations. Given the unique difficulties of some African countries, including their lack of access to private development funds, it is imperative that new efforts be made so as to effectively reach the targets of the Agenda. Since, by default, official development assistance is the dominant source of financial support for Africa, the international community should seek to fulfil its commitment to attain the accepted United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), including the targets of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Investment in Africa should also be fostered by supporting such areas as venture capital initiatives, institution-building and human resource development. In addition, given the persistent stagnation and even decline of some countries, there is a strong case for increasing the concessionary components and level of development assistance to Africa.

Another area that persistently undermines development efforts in Africa and requires attention is the continuing excessive debt situation. Standing at $322 billion in 1995 and representing 38.3 per cent of export earnings in 1994, the external debt overhang represents a tremendous drain on resources that would otherwise have been available for development purposes through domestic savings and external financial flows for development. Both the Naples terms agreed by the Paris Club and the recent initiative by the international financial institutions servicing multilateral debt are definitely steps in the right direction. It is important, as called for in the Ad Hoc Committee's report, that these efforts be continued. Also critical is that we recognize that piecemeal approaches alone cannot effectively redress the issue. There is an urgent need to employ a comprehensive approach so that the necessary critical mass to enable the African countries to resume development on a sustained and sustainable basis can be reached. Without such a "once-and-for-all" strategy in place, the debt problem cannot be decisively resolved.

International trade, especially in the post-Uruguay Round era, is an exceptional instrument for generating external earnings and promoting development. At the same time, the rapid liberalization of international trade and the advent of the Uruguay Round have had a negative impact on many developing countries. Thus, as previously warned by the Secretary-General, African countries could stand to lose up to $3 billion in foreign earnings by the turn of the century. It is therefore of critical importance that the World Trade Organization (WTO) closely monitor this critical situation and seek ways to alleviate the problem. In this regard, we welcome the proposed consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the Trade and Development Board of a joint programme of WTO, the International Trade Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on technical assistance to selected least developed and other African countries.

Other areas that could also be given priority attention by the international community include support for the promotion of human resources capacities, for the diversification of African economies, especially those dependent on a single commodity or small number of commodities, and for Africa's own efforts in South-South cooperation. Such cooperation deserves the support of the international community through various means, including trilateral arrangements. We urge the developed countries to provide this backing. For our part in Indonesia, we are, as in the past, fully committed to the further strengthening of South-South cooperation. We are continuing to build upon our South-South cooperation programmes and projects, especially activities of a technical cooperation among developing countries

(TCDC) nature with African countries. These we plan to build on and strengthen in the future.

In conclusion, as we — the international community — embark on the second half of the decade, certain facts have become clear. There is still obviously a lot more to be done if the Agenda is to be successfully implemented. To achieve this, I believe that international support and partnership should be reinforced with concrete and specific steps. Indonesia is committed to fully supporting any means that promise to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda.

Mr. Hamdan (Lebanon)(*interpretation from Arabic*): The problems suffered by all the African countries, albeit in varying degrees, require increased attention from the international community. This is because of the close interrelationship and joint interests among members of the international community and the common destiny that binds us together once we recognize that we live in a global village in which geographic borders cannot protect others from the physical or mental effects of those problems. The problems in Africa adversely affect the world environment and bring the conscience of the world as a whole face to face with the worsening humanitarian tragedy of millions of people, because of wars and conflicts that have led, in addition to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, to the flow of millions of refugees as a result of the high levels of poverty, malnutrition and communicable diseases.

On the other hand, the prosperity of the countries of this continent and the achievement of sustainable development of the continent could undoubtedly contribute in a dynamic manner to the promotion of the world economy and increased global welfare. Africa is replete with vast resources and can turn from being a burden on the international community into an active partner that enhances the welfare of that community. We are convinced that investment in the resolution of Africa's problems is an investment in future profitability. It is true that the main responsibility for the resolution of these problems lies first with the countries of the African continent. However, the assistance of the international community remains essential and important to enable these countries to achieve these solutions.

Investment in human beings is still the best way of attaining sustainable development. The management of resources and the achievement of political, social and economic stability are dependent on decisions made by individual people. We cannot propose theoretical approaches to correct imbalances and solve existing problems, however scientific these approaches may be, unless we first ensure a human response. Africa has already moved a long way in this direction. However, it still needs more programmes directed towards human resources. This principle, of course, applies to all countries and regions of the world. Such a belief might well have led to the organization of the series of world conferences since the start of the present decade, all of which were directed towards human welfare.

We have had the privilege of working in Africa for some time, and last year we chaired a group of members of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, which visited several African countries to look closely at the cooperation programmes that it was undertaking there. We became fully convinced that inherited social problems are the most serious impediment to sustainable development in Africa. Combating these problems cannot be achieved only through various economic programmes. There must also be programmes directed at local communities to enhance their capacities and increase their integration in the development process. Modern technology provides an effective means of implementing these programmes, and such technology and appropriate support resources should be provided for Africa.

Focusing on the political and managerial aspects of systems for national action in Africa should not divert our attention from the various real obstacles impeding the achievement of the desired structural reforms. The experiences of others can act as useful examples, provided that we do not limit ourselves to considering only the outcomes, but examine all the various stages. Democracy, the need to defend human rights, the elimination of the manifestations of corruption and the adoption of the concept of national accountability all require a realization by the public that the issue is one of conviction, not coercion.

Achieving the desired progress in these reforms requires a realistic approach and a long-term effort, in addition to positive cooperation on the part of the international community. It is time for us to strive for another model of international relations, based on encouragement and incentive, not deterrence and intimidation. In addition, it is unfair to hold Africa alone responsible for the failure of development programmes so far to achieve the desired results. Africa's partners are also responsible for this failure. The deterioration in the price of primary commodities and the brutal exploitation by transnationals of the weak points in African countries,

especially by encouraging corruption, the lack of official development assistance from the donor community and the withholding of necessary technology, in addition to indebtedness, have all contributed to the failure of these programmes. The international community must reconsider its relationship with Africa from the perspective of joint responsibility, not of relief.

Lebanon expresses its solidarity with Africa not only because it is a developing country, but also because it is linked with many of the countries of that continent through living bonds that go back 130 years. Many Lebanese emigrants settled in African countries and were integrated into their social, human and economic fabric, becoming citizens. We cannot forget that those countries opened their doors to receive tens of thousands of our people during the period of Lebanon's plight from 1975 to 1991. We therefore believe that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the recommendations of the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s acquire special importance. We call strongly for a collective, positive response to the implementation of that Initiative, and for the implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

In conclusion, we would also like to commend the contributions, assistance and cooperation programmes provided by the donor community, whether States, individuals, or regional and international organizations.

Mrs. Dengo (Costa Rica): I have the honour of addressing the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which was completed in September 1996. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Owada on his successful stewardship of the review process.

The Group of 77 and China welcome the outcome of the mid-term review transmitted to the General Assembly with the Secretary-General's note. In this context, we also take note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/50/885.

The complexity and seriousness of the African development problem demands understanding and solidarity. Indeed, the mid-term review of UN-NADAF confirms that, despite some positive changes that seem to have emerged over the last few years at both the economic and political levels, the dire straits in which the African continent finds itself has been exacerbated by several conflicts in some parts of the continent. For these reasons, the Group of 77 and China still firmly believe that Africa is a unique case that will test international cooperation for development for some time to come.

The majority of African countries have continued to undertake several measures in order to improve the performance of their economies with a view to paving the way for more sustained economic growth and sustainable development. These countries have embraced macroeconomic policy transformation and strengthened regional and subregional economic cooperation. They are actively promoting private investment and South-South cooperation as well as undertaking far-reaching political and social reforms such as the intensification of the democratization process and the participation of civil society in the development process. In spite of resource limitations, African countries are integrating the outcomes of the various United Nations conferences and summits into their national development plans and programmes.

It is imperative for the African countries to continue to obtain a significant amount of external support, especially in the form of official development assistance, in order to be able to create the national enabling environment and establish the necessary conditions to attract foreign investment and create a productive base that will allow them to participate and compete effectively in the international market place.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China is convinced that the urgent measures and recommendations agreed upon reflect a concrete attempt at a focused response that will enable some of the critical areas spelt out in UN-NADAF to be implemented by the year 2001. This is the minimum that the international community can do to support Africa's own efforts.

I wish to conclude by reiterating the solidarity of the Group of 77 and China and its firm commitment to the development of Africa and to the efforts aimed at accelerating the implementation of UN-NADAF. As developing countries, and in the spirit of South-South cooperation, we stand ready to extend our full support.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): South Africa actively participated in the recently concluded mid-term review of United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which from 16 to 20 September 1996 took stock of the implementation of

UN-NADAF over the last five years. We endorse the outcome of that review, especially the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

In this context, my delegation would like to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly, Ambassador Owada of Japan, for his tireless efforts in ensuring the successful outcome of the mid-term review. Not least, we would like also to thank the working groups' two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana and Ambassador Alex Reyn of Belgium, as well as the Rapporteur, Mr. Dušan Rovenský of the Czech Republic, for their work during the mid-term review.

My delegation believes that the General Assembly debate on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is a welcome opportunity to once again highlight the challenges facing the African continent and the role of the international community in helping the African countries confront these challenges. It is thus an occasion of great importance. In this context, my delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/51/228 and Add.1). We also associate ourselves fully with the draft resolution before this Assembly on the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

The success of this mid-term review attests to the continuing commitment of the international community to Africa's development. This was underlined by the participation of many delegations and international and non-governmental organizations in the mid-term review. But in the final analysis, it was the seriousness and sense of purpose characteristic of the participation of all the African delegations that took part in the review that ensured that the outcome of the process indeed had relevance and meaning for the millions of Africans who continue to hope for a better tomorrow free of hunger, disease and illiteracy.

While it is not the intention of my delegation to repeat here the debate that took place during the review of UN-NADAF, we would like to draw the Assembly's attention to a few of the salient recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. We fully agree that the pursuit of democratization, the promotion of and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and administrative reform are essential to creating an enabling environment for the sustained and sustainable growth and development of Africa. We also fully agree with the idea that pursuing and deepening economic reforms and improving the physical and institutional infrastructure for the purpose of attracting further domestic and foreign direct investment are crucial. The importance of the complementary technical and financial support of the international community in this regard cannot be overemphasized.

We are heartened by the attention that has been given to the need for cooperation between Africa and the international community to enhance African development by creating favourable conditions for achieving stability in private capital flows and for preventing destabilization arising from swift movements of these flows. We agree with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee's report that development needs to be undergirded by a human development dimension, and that people are at the centre of the international community's concerns for sustainable development.

Our participation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) underlines the importance we attach to subregional economic integration, with the ultimate aim of full implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Our determination to pursue South-South cooperation is shown by the growing cooperation between SADC and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). It is the intention of our subregion to expand such South-South cooperation with other subregions in the developing world.

We would like to re-emphasize our strong belief that the greatest challenge before the international community with regard to Africa's development is to address the two-headed dragon of Africa's crushing external debt burden and the overreliance of its economies on raw commodities. Until these two challenges in particular are addressed, Africa's capacity to mobilize resources at the domestic level will continue to be stunted, and its reliance on fickle and declining official development assistance and inflows of external resources will be unavoidable.

In conclusion, these two areas are of primary importance to the aims and objectives of UN-NADAF and need to be addressed effectively by the international community in the remaining years of the New Agenda. We also underline the importance of implementing the recommendations as agreed during the mid-term review, and, to further the achievement of this objective, we emphasize the need for a proper follow-up, monitoring and evaluation mechanism to be put in place throughout

the United Nations system. In this regard, it is our considered view that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa has a great role to play as a complement to UN-NADAF. In the interim, we look forward to the successful implementation of UN-NADAF as well as to its appraisal and final review in 2002.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): My delegation has taken due note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We note as well the distinguished leadership of this Committee by Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan and his able Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, Ambassador Reyn of Belgium, and Ambassador Réwaka of Gabon.

My delegation fully supports the draft resolution on the subject, and strongly recommends its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly as an expression of the international community's continued support for UN-NADAF. The outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF reaffirms, among other things, the enduring compact between Africa and the international community to ensure the implementation of the New Agenda and the achievement of its goals and objectives within the established time-frame. The mid-term review confirmed that implementation of UN-NADAF during the second half of its implementation phase will require greater adherence to the commitments made, and greater and consistent provision of the requisite resources, making possible an enabling environment for successfully achieving its objectives and ensuring a more effectively coordinated and coherent approach to the implementation process.

According to the report on of the mid-term review, the estimated resource mobilization levels of the New Agenda are still far from being attained, and the key development goals are yet to be met, in particular the goal of achieving an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent for African countries.

The implementation of UN-NADAF has been the subject of ongoing consideration by the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, reinforcing the importance attached to the successful implementation of the New Agenda while acknowledging its strengths and weaknesses. One major factor militating against the successful implementation of UN-NADAF and impeding the accelerated economic recovery of Africa is the debt overhang, which continues to grow in volume in spite of debt reduction measures introduced since the beginning of UN-NADAF. It is therefore important to formulate new initiatives that would go beyond the Toronto terms, the enhanced Trinidad and Tobago initiative, the Naples terms, existing bilateral and multilateral debt relief programmes, and present market initiatives to restructure private debt.

The international community's implementation of debt-reduction initiatives adopted in the 1990s has not fully produced the desired positive results. These initiatives have failed to equal the magnitude and complexity of the external debt burden of Africa. We note that bilateral debt is constantly rising and has remained the major component of Africa's external debt. Yet the relief treatment so far introduced, apart from giving African countries temporary relief from their bilateral debt burden, has failed to provide adequate relief for all African States, irrespective of their categorization as middle-income, slightly indebted or heavily- indebted countries.

Secondly, this situation is compounded by the ever-growing arrears of debt servicing. The failure of Africa to meet its external debt obligations has eroded the confidence in African economies and has consequently made it difficult to attract new investment from sources other than multilateral institutions. In this connection, the debt situation remains dismally unchanged in spite of efforts by Africa and the international community to collectively find a suitable and acceptable debt relief initiative or strategy. Africa's external debt has continued to rise, and exceeded $310 billion in 1994. My colleague from Ghana was able to confirm that it is now up to $320 billion. Debt servicing has now reached an average of $28 billion, which exceeds by far the yearly target of $9 billion recommended by UN-NADAF.

One of the effects of the debt overhang that constitutes another factor militating against the sustained development and economic growth of African countries is the decline in foreign direct investment. Records indicate that while foreign direct investment has been growing appreciably in other regions of the world in the 1990s, it has failed to register significant growth in volume in Africa and, in the process, has also failed to introduce to the region the transfer of technology and human skills that accompany it.

During this decade, less than 2 per cent of foreign direct investment flows have been received in Africa, maintaining a level of flow of about $3 billion a year.

This low level of foreign direct investment in Africa, concentrated mostly in the petroleum and mining industries, implies a failure to meet the commitments and objectives identified under UN-NADAF. The decline in foreign direct investment flows has seriously affected Africa's capacity to market the value of its products, improve its technical expertise in the various sectors of the economy, and maintain the attractiveness of its investment potentials.

Africa's cumulative benefits from globalization and liberalization have been limited by the narrowness of Africa's participation in world trade and disadvantageous world market forces, contrary to the objectives of UN-NADAF, the Uruguay Round agreements and other concessionary rates provided by its development partners. Exports from Africa account for less than 3 per cent of the total volume of world trade as a result of tariffs and access restrictions, which, in spite of the commitments under UN-NADAF, have not been removed.

Africa has made remarkable efforts to achieve the goals of UN-NADAF in accordance with its various commitments and responsibilities. In this regard, we note that the democratization process in Africa has accelerated during the period, with greater attention paid to the accepted principles of governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for and preservation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the same vein, African Governments are allocating more of their national budgets to building their social and economic infrastructures, in particular to strengthening the health, education, employment, environmental, communication and transport sectors. The gains from these investments remain slight, due mainly to limited resource allocations, as well as the presence of other factors militating against sustained development in these areas.

One factor associated with these obstacles is poverty. The incidence of poverty is widespread in Africa and has seriously affected Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable human development and economic growth and recovery. The failure to formulate an effective strategy for poverty eradication in Africa has added to the growing problem of poverty. The international community's commitment to poverty eradication, adopted in Copenhagen at the World Summit for Social Development, should, within the framework of UN-NADAF, ensure the provision of greater assistance and resources for the eradication of poverty in Africa, which today lags behind the other regions of the world in fighting and overcoming absolute poverty.

The implementation of UN-NADAF during the second half of the programme will require great effort on the part of Africa and the international community to overcome the obstacles and shortcomings identified; one must build on the successes of the UN-NADAF programme so far achieved. There is also a need for the partners to remain firm in their collective responsibilities and commitments so crucial to the overall successful implementation of UN-NADAF. The recently launched United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa is expected to be complementary to UN-NADAF, and to provide it with much needed stimulus to ensure its effective implementation.

The primary concern for the successful implementation of UN-NADAF remains the responsibility of Africa, which should, among other considerations, continue its efforts to successfully mobilize the required aggregate $82.5 billion. Facilitating the effective implementation of UN-NADAF in order to improve socio-economic conditions and living standards in African countries through economic growth should be the concern and commitment of the international community.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that in order to facilitate the conduct of the election of members to the International Law Commission, under agenda item 17 (a), on Monday, 11 November 1996, we shall proceed, in accordance with established practice, to seek a decision by the General Assembly on the matter of requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised, updated list of candidates reflecting all submissions received. It is the intent of the President of the General Assembly to consult the Assembly in this regard at our next plenary meeting, tomorrow morning, 5 November 1996.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.